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ABSTRACT

This handbook outlines the curriculum objectives for the children's television program, "The Electric Company." The first portion of the text delineates strategies for teaching symbol/sound analysis, including units on blends, letter groups, and word structure. A second section addresses strategies for reading for meaning, including processing morphemes, scanning for structure, and context clues. For each objective, examples are provided and teaching guidelines are suggested. Also included is a discussion of black dialect and possible difficulties in teaching English to Spanish speaking children. The appendixes include: (1) frequency and learnability lists, (2) a consonant elements chart, and (3) a percent of utility list for vowel combinations. (EMH)

THE ELECTRIC COMPANY

WRITERS' NOTEBOOK

Children's Television Workshop
August, 1971

CURRICULUM OUTLINE

I. Strategies for Symbol/Sound Analysis

A. Processing Linear Combinations, or Blending

1. Consonants
2. Vowels
3. Consonant Blends

B. Processing Letter Groups as Units ("Chunks")

1. Vowel Combinations
2. Consonant Digraphs
3. Controlled Vowels
4. Larger Spelling Patterns
5. Sight Words

C. Scanning for Structure

1. Final "e" Signalling a "Long"* Vowel Sound
2. Double Consonant Signalling a "Short"* Vowel Sound
3. Open Syllable Signalling a "Long"* Vowel Sound

II. Strategies for Reading for Meaning

A. Processing Morphemes as Meaning Units ("Chunks")

B. Scanning for Structure

C. Using Context Clues

I. Strategies for Symbol/Sound Analysis

The objective is to teach the child some of the most essential pieces of the written code, relating these to the processes of decoding. Each symbol/sound correspondence will be taught in the context of a syllable, word or phrase.

A. Processing Linear Combinations, or Blending

The child can demonstrate his knowledge of individual letter/sound correspondences by blending the sounds in simple linear sequence to produce intelligible words. He can do this following a simple blending model (r-a-n) or a word family model (m-an, r-an).

1. Consonants

b (as in bag)
c (as in cat and as in city)
d (as in dog)
f (as in fig)
g (as in got and as in gin)
h (as in hot)
j (as in jet)
k (as in kiss)
l (as in lot)
m (as in map)
n (as in nap)
p (as in pot)
qu (as in quit)
r (as in rot)
s (as in sit)
t (as in top)
v (as in vat)
w (as in won)
x (as in extra)
z (as in zoo)

Teaching Guidelines - Using the Blending Method (r-a-n), the child learns to associate each speech sound (phoneme) with each letter (grapheme), and then to combine those sounds in linear combination to form a word. It is better to use this simple blending method to teach "sustaining consonants" (those consonants whose sound can be held indefinitely without changing or distorting the sound). The sustaining consonants, also known as "continuants," are f, h, j, l, m, n, r, s, v, w, z. The remaining consonants (b, d, k, p, t, x, y), known as "stopped consonants," may be taught both with word families and simple blending methods. The use of letter names, however, interferes with the blending process, and should be kept to a minimum in bits designed to teach letter sounds.

The consonants "c" and "g" have two sounds (cat, city; got, gin) both of which will be taught. Both sounds may be taught in the same show, or the same bit, but this is not always required. For both "c" and "g" the vowel following the consonant determines (with some exceptions) whether the consonant is "hard" or "soft". The general rule is that "c" and "g" followed by the vowels "e" or "i" are soft; when followed by "a", "o", or "u", the consonant sound is hard.

Although this principle is rather reliable for the letter "c" and for the letter "g" when followed by "a", "o", or "u", there are many exceptions to the principle when the consonant "g" is followed by "e" or "i" (gift, girdle, girl, giggle, give, target, tiger). Consequently,

it is advisable to avoid introducing this aspect of the principle. The principle for the two sounds of "c" and the hard sound of "g", however, could be illustrated through a simple mnemonic device, such as:

"My cutie's cool car."
(Hard sound when followed by "a, "o", "u")

"My gal's got gum."

"A one cent cigar." (Soft sound when followed by "e", "i")

Certain confusable pairs of consonants present problems to beginning readers. They are confusing because (1) they look alike (p, q); (2) they sound alike (m, n); or (3) they both look and sound alike (b, d). These confusable pairs should occasionally be presented together, so that the confusion is confronted directly. One effective way to do this is to have someone read a sentence or phrase incorrectly (dig for big) and then to correct it, drawing attention to the differences.

Note that the consonant "q" should always be presented together with the vowel "u".

Two additional rules for teaching consonant sounds are noted below: First, avoid using consonant sounds that are embedded in a consonant blend when the objective is to teach the individual consonant sound. For instance, in teaching the sound of the letter "b", don't use the word "brat". The reason for this is that the letter sound is always clearer when followed by a vowel.

Secondly, in teaching individual letter/sound correspondences, it is better to teach the sound the letter makes in the initial position of a simple word first (e.g., top, toe, tin); later the letter should be taught in the medial and final position of a word. You can't assume

that the child will know a particular sound in the medial or final position just because he has learned the sound in the initial position. A piece including a set of words like "top", "toe", "tin" is likely to be more effective in teaching the "t" sound than a piece using "tar", "far", "car which teaches "t" sound by deduction; however, it would be even better to teach the "t" sound with a set of words like "top", "sit", and "later" in which the "t" sound is presented in all three positions. However, since poor readers tend to look only at the beginning of words, sound being taught in medial or final position require special stress.

I. Strategies for Symbol/Sound Analysis

A. Processing Linear Combinations, or Blending

1. Consonants

2. Vowels

a (as in rat)
e (as in met)
i (as in bit)
o (as in hot)
u (as in cut)
y (as in dry and as in happy)

Teaching Guidelines - The sounds of short vowels should never be taught alone; rather they should always be taught in the context of a short word (e.g., "hot", not short sound "o") or morpheme. When teaching short vowels, words in which the vowel is followed by "l", "w", or "u" should not be used as examples because these letters change the sound of the vowel. (For example, notice the difference between the "a" sound in the word "cat", and the "a" sound in the word "car".) Remember, it is undesirable to use the name of the vowel when teaching the short vowel sound because the vowel's name is the "long" vowel sound.

I. Strategies for Symbol/Sound Analysis

A. Processing Linear Combinations, or Blending

1. Consonants

2. Vowels

3. Consonant Blends (initial and final)

bl-, br-, cl-, cr-, -ct, dr-, -ft, gr-, -nd, -nt,

pl-, pr-, sk-, -sk, sp-, st-, -st, tr-

Teaching Guidelines - Consonant blends are themselves examples of the application of this blending strategy. Since consonant blends can be sounded out letter by letter, the blending principle will be stressed in teaching them. The entire list will not necessarily be taught. Teach the idea that two or more consonants can be combined to produce another intelligible speech sound.

Blends should be treated at the beginning of words first because (1) they are harder to hear at ends of words, and (2) many speakers don't pronounce final blends (e.g., tes' for test). When final blends are presented, they should be stressed both orally and graphically. Blends which lend themselves especially well to presentation in final position are -nt, -nk, -lt, -lp, -mp, because neither member of these blends are dropped by dialect speakers.

I. Strategies for Symbol/Sound Analysis

A. Processing Linear Combinations, or Blending

1. Consonants

2. Vowels

3. Consonant Blends

B. Processing Letter Groups as Units, or Chunks

The child can recognize certain groups of letters as single units and process them as such when sounding out words. For example:

1. Vowel Combinations

ai (as in bait)
ay (as in day)
ea (as in neat)
ee (as in see)
ie (as in die and as in thief)
oa (as in boat)
oi (as in boil)
oo (as in food and as in good)
ou (as in found)
ow (as in know and as in cow)
oy (as in toy)

Teaching Guidelines - The goal of "chunking" is to get the child to recognize certain groups of letters as a single unit which has a particular sound. The point is to stress the correspondence between a group of letters and that group's single sound. The group of letters should never be separated, and the letter names should not be mentioned, but should be taught as a unified pattern.

Different spellings for the same sound (e.g., the long "e" sound for the two spelling patterns "ea" and "ee") can be taught in the same piece; letter groups such as "oo" and "ow" which have two different

sounds (food/good; know/cow) can also be treated together within the same piece but may require more repetitions because this discrimination is more difficult for poor readers.

Note that the variation in "oo" (food/good) only occurs in words which end with "d". In words with "oo" followed by "k", "m", "n" or "t", the sound is consistently one way ("oo" as in food) or the other ("oo" as in good). For example, book, look, cook; boom, zoom, moon soon; root, hoot, shoot.

The vowel combination "ow" is the most erratic of the vowel combinations and will require special treatment since the discrimination can only be made through meaning (context) or visualization of the object. For example, from a list of "ow" words, a word could move into sentences which determine one pronunciation or the other, and thus into two columns at the end of the bit, e.g.

cow
low
wow
how
blow

The vowel combination "ie" generally has the long "i" sound only in an open syllable word (pie, die, lie); otherwise it sounds like "ee" (field, yield).

Writers' Notebook

I. Strategies for Symbol/Sound Analysis

A. Processing Linear Combinations, or Blending

1. Consonants

2. Vowels

3. Consonant Blends

B. Processing Letter Groups as Units, or Chunks

1. Vowel Combinations

2. Consonant Digraphs

ch (as in chop)
ph (as in phone)
sh (as in ship)
th (as in thin and as in this)

Teaching Guidelines - Consonant Digraphs should be taught in the same context as regular consonants: i.e., they should be taught as a single sound (phoneme) or speech unit. The two consonants in the digraph should never be separated, and it should not be stated that "t" and "h" make the "th" sound. The function of a digraph as a single sound unit should be stressed.

I. Strategies for Symbol/Sound Analysis

A. Processing Linear Combinations, or Blending

1. Consonants

2. Vowels

3. Consonant Blends

B. Processing Letter Groups as Units, or Chunks

1. Vowel Combinations

2. Consonant Digraphs

3. Controlled Vowels

ar (as in car)
er (as in fern)
ir (as in bird)
ur (as in burn)

Teaching Guidelines - The sound of a vowel is altered when followed by "r". That sound is neither a long nor a short sound, rather a third sound which is different and separate. Consequently, a vowel plus "r" should be treated as a special sound. It is important not to separate the vowel from the "r" but to treat them as a unit. (Normally, "ir", "ur", and "er" all sound alike.)

Remember that "r" is not pronounced in many dialects around the country. Therefore some children may not hear it when pronounced on the show. Segments on "r-controlled" vowels may be used as a good vehicle for pointing out dialect differences.

I. Strategies for Symbol/Sound Analysis

A. Processing Linear Combinations, or Blending

1. Consonants

2. Vowels

3. Consonant Blends

B. Processing Letter Groups as Units, or Chunks

1. Vowel Combinations

2. Consonant Digraphs

3. Controlled Vowels

4. Larger Spelling Patterns

-all (as in tall)
-alk (as in talk)
-igh(t) (as in high and as in night)
-ing (as in sing)
-tion (as in action)

Teaching Guidelines - The two spelling patterns -all, and -alk are special in that the "l" affects the preceding vowel, producing neither a long nor a short sound but a third and separate sound. Consequently, the vowel "a" should never be separated from "-ll" or "-lk" when those patterns are being taught.

The two spelling patterns "-igh" and "ight" should be taught as single units with a long "i" sound.

The spelling pattern "-tion" usually has the sound of "shun" as in action, invitation, vacation.

I. Strategies for Symbol/Sound Analysis

A. Processing Linear Combinations, or Blending

1. Consonants

2. Vowels

3. Consonant Blends

B. Processing Letter Groups as Units, or Chunks

1. Vowel Combinations

2. Consonant Digraphs

3. Controlled Vowels

4. Larger Spelling Patterns

5. Sight Words

Usually words designated as "Sight Words" are treated as whole word configurations because they cannot be sounded out easily. It is not necessary, however, to limit the presentation of sight words to words which are phonically irregular. Words taught as sight words should not be sounded out but rather should be pronounced several times. Also spelling out words as in "e-d-g-e - edge" has been found to be confusing and should be avoided. It is better to present the word as a whole.

Again, the criteria for sight words are threefold: (a) high frequency in reading (the, of); (b) high frequency in the environment (stop, walk, school); (c) high interest words (scram). Included below is an expanded sight word list based on the above categories. Those words marked with an asterick will be specifically assigned; the other words merely serve as an indication of the types of words that can be used as sight words.

At the same time, however, the writers are encouraged to use those words as frequently as possible.

High Frequency in Reading	High Frequency in Environment	High Interest Words
*to (in context)	walk (don't walk)	astronaut
*the	stop	space
*of	up	rocket
*if (in context)	down	(base) ball
*for	girls	(foot) "
*was	boys	(stick) "
*you	enter	monster/creature
*on	exit	rock (as in music)
*says	gym	picnic
*said	phone (telephone)	peanut butter
*there	days of the week	pizza
*here	months of the year	guitar
*does	month	bubble gum
*goes	swimming pool	bike, bicycle
*were	play ground	motorcycle
*been	trash	television
*they	garbage	superman
*who	store	zap
*what	slow	ice cream
	avenue	creepy
	street	busy
	children	free
	litter	popsicle
	curb	
	mail	
	police	
	way	

I. Strategies for Symbol/Sound Analysis

A. Processing Linear Combinations, or Blending

1. Consonants

2. Vowels

3. Consonant Blends

B. Processing Letter Groups as Units, or Chunks

1. Vowel Combinations

2. Consonant Digraphs

3. Controlled Vowels

4. Larger Spelling Patterns

5. Sight Words

C. Scanning for Structure

The child can recognize the following structural spelling patterns and can successfully read words containing them:

1. Final e Signalling a "Long"* Vowel Sound

mate (vs. mat)
Pete (vs. pet)
bite (vs. bit)
note (vs. not)
cute (vs. cut)

Teaching Guidelines - It is not necessary to teach silent "e" words always in contrast with another word (mat/mate). In explaining the effect of silent "e", it is permissible to say that the final "e" makes the preceding vowel "say its name."

To the children in our target population, adding an "e" to change the preceding vowel to a long sound is quite a different process from

taking away the "e" and changing the vowel from long to short. The former is probably much easier than the latter. We can't assume that having taught the process in one direction (mat/mate), the child can do the same thing in the other direction (mate/mat). Both processes should be taught, though not necessarily in the same piece.

I. Strategies for Symbol/Sound Analysis

A. Processing Linear Combinations, or Blending

1. Consonants

2. Vowels

3. Consonant Blends

B. Processing Letter Groups as Units, or Chunks

1. Vowel Combinations

2. Consonant Digraphs

3. Controlled Vowels

4. Larger Spelling Patterns

5. Sight Words

C. Scanning for Structure

1. Final e Signalling a "Long"* Vowel Sound

2. Double Consonant Signalling a "Short"* Vowel Sound

latter (vs. later)
petter (vs. Peter)
bitter (vs. biter)
totter (vs. toter)
cutter (vs. cuter)

Teaching Guidelines - To the children in our target population, adding a double consonant to change the preceding vowel to a short sound is quite a different process from taking away the double consonant and changing the vowel sound from short to long. We can't assume that having taught the process in one direction (later/latter), the child can do the same thing in the other direction (latter/later). Both processes should be taught, though not necessarily in the same piece. Here, again, use of the explanation "the vowel says its name", is permissible.

I. Strategies for Symbol/Sound Analysis

A. Processing Linear Combinations, or Blending

1. Consonants

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3. Consonant Blends

B. Processing Letter Groups as Units, or Chunks

1. Vowel Combinations

2. Consonant Digraphs

3. Controlled Vowels

4. Larger Spelling Patterns

5. Sight Words

C. Scanning for Structure

1. Final e Signalling a "Long"* Vowel Sound

2. Double Consonant Signalling a "Short"* Vowel Sound

3. Open Syllable Signalling a "Long"* Vowel Sound

he (vs. hem)
hi (vs. hit)
no (vs. not)

Teaching Guidelines - A word or syllable is considered "open" when it ends with a vowel. Open Syllables signal a "long" vowel sound, or a vowel which "says its name." Examples of open and closed syllables in words are:

Open Syllable	Closed Syllable
o/pen	fox
pa/per	hap/pen
be/fore	shed
pi/per	fid/dle
mu/sic	sur/prise

Ideally what we're teaching is the principle of "open syllable" rather than the sound of each vowel in this position. This can be taught in contrast to the consonant-vowel-consonant structure which signals a short vowel, and is a highly frequent basic unit in English. The consonant-vowel-consonant can be used as a basis for presenting all the structural variations discussed above, e.g., bi bit bite bitter.

II. Strategies for Reading for Meaning

The general objective here is to convey to the child that the ultimate goal of decoding is to reconstruct the intended meaning; his job is not completed with phonic analysis alone. Reading will be presented as a problem-solving endeavor, in which the purpose is to extract meaning.

This attitude will be fostered in the child in two ways: first, by supporting decoding efforts with meaningful context; second, by teaching the child some reliable meaning signals, and some strategies for utilizing them in interpreting phrases and sentences.

Since many of the critical morphemic and syntactic features of written Standard English are absent, or realized in a different form in non-standard speech, testing procedures will not require the production of these features in speech as a criterion for mastery. For example, a test of morpheme mastery might be constructed as follows:

Yesterday John { played / plays } football.

The order in which the skills below are presented does not imply a hierarchy of complexity or a behavior sequence. These skills are necessarily used in combination in the process of reading for meaning.

A. Processing Morphemes as Meaning Units ("Chunks")

The child can interpret some high-frequency Standard English morphemes, when presented in an appropriate context. For example:

-ed	
-er, -est	(comparative and superlative adjectives)
-ing	
-ly	(adverbial)
-n't	(negative contraction)
-s	(plural)
-s	(3rd person singular)
-'s	(contraction)
-'s	(possessive)
un-	

Teaching Guidelines - Morphemes have been included here because they often affect the meaning of the whole sentence in addition to the word they are directly attached to. Most of the morphemes included are the ones that present problems to dialect speakers. Those which occur at the end of a word are often dropped in black dialect, and therefore should be both orally and visually stressed.

The verb ending morphemes (-ed, -ing, -s) have high frequency and are most often useful in providing clues to the meaning of the whole sentence. Adverbs are rarely used by children, so we should stick to a few simple ones in teaching this concept, e.g., slowly, quickly, sadly. Some comparative forms require the doubling of a consonant, e.g., big, bigger. These should not be taught in the same bit with words which do not require doubling of the consonant. The latter should be introduced first, e.g., long, longer, longest. The -ing verb ending should not be confused with ing as in thing. If the purpose is to teach the morpheme

and its meaning, verbs with ing added must be used, e.g., sitting, singing, and these should be presented in a context which makes the meaning of -ing clear, as in "The boy is sitting on the chair." One way to do this is to contrast -ing with other verb tenses: played, playing.

's possessive is an easier concept for our audience than 's contraction because ownership is an easily understood concept; the idea of combining two words into one is difficult for young children and 's contraction doesn't add any clues to the meaning of the sentence. 's contraction will be easier to understand if taught along with the other contractions, rather than with the possessive to which it has no functional relation. Note: In teaching final morphemes, Latin-type music is a good vehicle because it has final stress.

II. Strategies for Reading for Meaning

A. Processing Morphemes as Meaning Units ("Chunks")

B. Scanning for Structure

1. The child can read the words in a phrase or sentence in linear order, and rehearse them, if necessary, until they combine in an approximation of spoken language which allows him to derive meaning of the phrase or sentence.

Teaching Guidelines -- When creating a sentence for this purpose the sentence should be built from those simpler elements that have been presented during the same ½-hour show, insofar as possible, including sight words, intact units, decoding strategies, etc. This is to give the child as much opportunity for success in reading the sentence as possible.

II. Strategies for Reading for Meaning

A. Processing Morphemes as Meaning Units ("Chunks")

B. Scanning for Structure

2. The child can use his knowledge of certain syntactic structures of spoken English to derive the meaning of a phrase or sentence. For example:

a. Given the context "The _____ is pretty," the child can supply a noun* or noun phrase.*

b. Given the context "The boy _____ the ball," the child can provide a verb or verb phrase.*

c. Given the context "The man walks _____," the child can provide a prepositional* or adverbial phrase.*

d. Given the context "The _____ flower is pretty," the child can provide an adjective* or adverbial phrase.*

e. Given a scrambled sentence, the child can arrange it in a meaningful order.

Teaching Guidelines - Other ways of acquainting the child with syntactic structure are as follows:

1. Each time a sentence is presented on the screen, the syntactic units can be separated slightly, e.g., The man walked to the store.

2. Scrambled sentences can be presented with the syntactic units intact, e.g., his supper My dog wants; Or syntactic units may be assembled first, then these are assembled into a sentence, e.g.

(a) sitting he on floor the is

(b) on the floor is sitting he

(c) He is sitting on the floor.

3. Assemble a basic sentence, then add modifiers, (visualizing each stage) e.g., boy the has a ball big great

The boy has a ball (visualize)

The great big boy has a ball. (visual of huge boy with small ball)

The boy has a great big ball. (visual of small boy with big ball)

4. Use sentence structure to determine meaning if a word is otherwise ambiguous. (The bow/bow bit in the test shows is an example of this. The correct pronunciation could not be determined without using the rest of the sentence to tell whether "bow" was a noun or a verb.) —

II. Strategies for Reading for Meaning

A. Processing Morphemes as Meaning Units ("Chunks")

B. Scanning for Structure

3. The child can utilize the following punctuation cues in interpreting sentences:

a. A sentence begins with a capital letter.

b. A sentence ends with a ., a ?, or an !, providing information about its meaning.

c. Quotation marks indicate direct speech.

Teaching Guidelines - The idea here is to help the child utilize punctuation cues in interpreting sentences. Our goal is to show the child that each "mark" affects the meaning of the sentence in some way. Punctuation changes meaning and inflection, such as in the statement "You came back.", and the rhetorical question, "You came back?" Remember that using the same sentence with different inflection, however, in order to teach the effect of changed punctuation, seems to be too subtle a tactic for our target audience.

Indicating rise and fall of the voice by physical positioning or size of words could help the child place punctuation. Period and capital letters can be taught as a pair. That is, the child could come to expect that when he sees a period a capital letter (a new sentence) will follow. Because of the limited value of quotation marks to our readers, very little time should be spent on this and examples should be kept very simple. Note that it may be confusing to children to say that the quotations contain "what is said," when in fact in reading aloud the entire sentence is said.

II. Strategies for Reading for Meaning

A. Processing Morphemes as Meaning Units ("Chunks")

B. Scanning for Structure

C. Using Context Clues

The child can use context clues to guess at an unfamiliar word in order to complete his understanding of the phrase or sentence in which it occurs.

1. Given a phrase or sentence containing a word which he cannot sound out, but which is in his spoken vocabulary, the child can use contextual clues to guess at the identity of the word, and check his guess for a plausible relation to the spelling of the word in question.
2. Given a phrase or sentence containing a word which he can sound out, but which is not in his spoken vocabulary, the child can use contextual clues to determine a probable meaning for the word.
3. Given a phrase or sentence containing a word which he cannot sound out, and which is not in his spoken vocabulary, the child can use contextual clues to determine the probable meaning for the word, even though he cannot pronounce it.

Teaching Guidelines - Examples of the above might be the following:

1. The boy is busy working on his bike. (A word which he cannot sound out but which is in his vocabulary.)

2. I planted snapdragons in my garden. (A word which he can sound out but which is not in his spoken vocabulary.)

3. My sister plays the drums in an orchestra. (A word which he cannot sound out, and which is not in his spoken vocabulary.)

Writer's Notebook - Non Standard Dialect

TREATMENT OF NON-STANDARD DIALECT IN THE CTW READING SHOW

Many of the children in the CTW Reading Show target audience are speakers of dialects of English which are sufficiently different from standard English to cause them some difficulty in decoding print into speech. Since the syntax and phonology of these dialects diverge significantly from standard English, the written-to-spoken correspondences which hold for those whose speech is close to the written standard often break down, making the decoding task a puzzling and illogical one for these children.

Our goal is to alleviate this confusion by acknowledging dialect differences and presenting dialect speech in appropriate circumstances. At the same time we will try to help children who are speakers of non-standard dialects to gain facility in interpreting functionally significant features of standard English. It is not one of our express goals to alter children's speech.

The general approach to dialect in the Reading Show will be based on a division of show materials into two categories: (a) situations in which spoken language is encoded in print, via speech balloons or some similar devide; and (b) situations in which print is decoded into speech and the emphasis is placed

on the decoding process.

In the first case, printed representation of dialect speech, including non-standard syntactical patterns and special vocabulary, will be limited to dramatic situations and to speakers for whom a particular dialect or dialects are appropriate. While the syntactical patterns of non-standard dialects will be obeyed, words, however, will not be misspelled in an attempt to represent dialect pronunciation. For example, "Her going" for "She is going" is acceptable, but "I be goin" for I be going" is not.

Secondly, accents characteristic of speakers of various dialects will be used frequently in instructional sequences. In these instances, meaningful context will be provided, so that the identification of the word in question, no matter what the dialect of the speaker, cannot be ambiguous. Context may be provided by putting the word or phrase into the context of a sentence, or by adding a picture clue. In general, instructional sequences will employ speakers who realize in some way in their speech the significant feature being taught. For example, it would be confusing to use a speaker who does not acknowledge the final s in his speech in a piece teaching pluralization.

Words which are confusing to some children because of dialect interference (pin/pen for Black children, hat/hot for Spanish children) should be avoided in situations where context are sketchy, such as in word analysis, transformation games and rhyming games. Furthermore, because of the poor quality of home TV, a printed word, accompanied by audio clues, will not be sufficient to teach to discrimination problems directly. Rather, meaning clues are absolutely essential.

Writer's Notebook - Non-Standard Dialect

The following section contains some specific features to be aware of in teaching dialect speakers--particularly Black and Hispanic speakers. The first part of each section is a general summary of the most significant aspects of the dialect. The second part contains a detailed outline of the significant phonological and syntactical characteristics of Black English and Spanish interference in standard English. This does not mean the materials involving these elements are to be avoided. In fact, in many cases it will be desirable to confront the problem directly.

BLACK DIALECT - GENERAL FEATURES

Consonants: Omission of final consonants often occurs in non-standard speech. However, final consonants are more often produced when the next word begins with a vowel.

Black dialect speakers have difficulty hearing the difference between a voiceless consonant, and its voiced counterpart, (e.g., p,b; t,d, f,v, s,z) at the end of a word. However, the length of the preceding vowel (not as in "long vowel" vs. "short vowel," but the real duration of the sound) is a reliable clue to the black child: The vowel sounds much longer when the final consonant is voiced, than when it is voiceless. For example, the difference between pad and pat, is really the difference between: p-a-aɔ and p-a, (the ɔ stands for a catch of the breath in the throat, called a glottal stop.)

Thus, in testing Black dialect speakers, the examiner should listen for a vowel length rather than expecting to hear a complete consonant sound.

-ng is only pronounced as -n when it occurs at the end of the unstressed -ing syllable, as in words like: swimming, going, doing. The full -ng sound does occur in words like: sing, swing, king, where the -ng syllable is stressed. (This feature, however is not as crucial as some others in terms of social stigmatization.)

Writer's Notebook - Non-Standard Dialect

Short vowels: In Black English, short i and short e do not contrast before nasal consonants (m, n, and ng) so that pin and pen sound alike. Words ending in nasal consonants would thus be poor choices for teaching these vowel sounds. The real problem is that short i is raised in the mouth to sound like a, so that think sounds like thank. As with the related nasal consonant problem (above), this confusion is common to all Southern speech, and therefore is not a stigma. Short e is also sometimes pronounced like ai (laig for leg, baid for bed).

Consonant Blends: At the end of a word the final consonant blend may be simplified, so that test becomes tes. This is most consistently true for the following blends: -st, -sp, -ft, -nd, -ld, -pt, -ct. This does not apply where one member of the blend is voiced and the other voiceless, as in -mp (jump, ramp), -nt (count, rent), -lt (colt, belt). The m, n, and l are voiced consonants. The p and t are voiceless consonants. As a result, certain pairs of words have identical pronunciation: build/bill; coal/cold, west/wes. "thr" as in throw is a real problem for black speakers. Usually it comes out as tr, but kr and fr occur, too.

Consonant Digraphs: In Black English, th as in thing is t, and th as in they is d at the beginning of a word. In the middle of a word, or at the end, bath becomes baf and bathe becomes bave.

Writer's Notebook - Non-Standard Dialect

Vowel Diphthongs: -oy as in boy is boah (lacking the -ee sound at the end) in Black English. When the following consonant is voiceless, however (f,k,p,s,t), the full diphthong is usually produced, as in boisterous. The -ee sound at the end of the diphthong is most often lacking before -l. This causes confusions like oil/all.

Controlled Vowels: r and l may be absent in the vowel-controlling position (following the vowel) in Black English, giving hep for help.

Morphemes: Most of the morphemes in the goals list were singled out because they are either absent or realized in a different way in some non-standard speech. The point in including them is to help speakers of non-standard dialects to interpret standard English print. Therefore it is more important for our purposes that these morphemes be presented as signals for certain meanings, and that they be recognized as such, than than they elicit appropriate sounds in oral reading. For example, it is desirable to include time signals like 'today,' 'now,' 'last year,' in sentences illustrating tense markers, so that the association between the morpheme (e.g., -ed) and the time it signals (e.g., past) is clear.

-ed is generally not added to the verb to mark past tense by Black English or Spanish speakers.

-s (plural) is sometimes absent, but it is often pronounced if the next word begins with a vowel sound, or where there is no

numeral in the sentence to serve as a plural marker.

-s (third person singular) is generally not employed in Black English, and is also a problem for Spanish speakers.

-s is usually omitted (Mr. Brown hat is the common form).

Both a and an are realized as a in Black English (a apple).

-s (plural) can come out as d.

Contractions are particularly troublesome; they make sounds which are hard for dialect speakers to hear anyway, even harder to decipher. Contractions are very seldom used by Black and Puerto Rican speakers anyway, so they ought to be avoided for the most part.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BLACK ENGLISH

NOTE: The following is an outline of the significant syntactical and phonological features of black English as detailed in two publications: (1) Some Linguistic Features of Negro Dialect, by Ralph W. Fasold and Walt Wolfram; and (2) Nonstandard Dialect, published by the National Council of Teachers of English.

I. Syntactical Characteristics of Black English

A. Verb Forms and Verb Markers

1. Dialect usages of the form "to be"

a. The form "be" is often used in place of other forms of the auxiliary, regardless of the subject

(1) He be doing that.
(2) They be messing around.
(3) I be here this afternoon.

b. The forms "is" and "are" of the verb "to be" are omitted; the "am" (or its contraction "'m") is almost always present

(1) He tired.
(2) They with us.
(3) I'm happy.

c. No conformity exists in person-number agreement when full forms of "to be" are used; generally, the past tense form is "was", the present tense form is "is"

(1) They was there.
(2) The boys is there.

2. The third person singular present tense marker

a. The suffix "-s" or "-es", used in standard English to identify the present tense of a regular third person singular verb, is absent in black dialect

(1) He do.
(2) It know.

b. The "-s" suffix is absent from the auxiliary "don't" in the present tense when the subject is in the third person singular (as opposed to "doesn't")

(1) He don't go.
(2) He don't walk.

c. Since the "-s" suffix does not exist in black dialect, the verbs "have" and "do" remain such in the 3rd person singular, present tense, rather than "has"/"does"

(1). He have a bike.
(2) He always do silly things.

3. The four perfective constructions in black dialect

a. Present - ~~The forms~~ of "have", often contracted in standard English ('ve, 's) are often omitted

(1) I been here for hours..
(2) He gone home already.

b. Past - This construction with "had" is more common in black dialect narratives than in standard English

(1) He had found the money.
(2)

c. Completive - Formed from the verb "done" plus a past form of the verb

(1) They done came.
(2) I done forgot what you call it.

d. Remote time - Indicates that the speaker conceives of the action taking place in the distant past

(1) I been had it there for about three years.
(2) You won't get your dues that you been paid.

4. Nonstandard forms involving future tense

a. "Gonna" is frequently a future indicator in black dialect

(1) He gonna go.
(2) He gonna get in trouble.

b. The use of "will" to indicate future is frequently contracted ('ll) or eliminated, particularly when the next word begins with a labial consonant

(1) He'll go tomorrow.
(2) He miss you tomorrow.

B. Nouns, Pronouns, Adjectives, Adverbs

1. The formation of plurals with "-s" or "-es" markers

a. The "-s" or "-es" suffixes which mark most plurals in standard English are occasionally absent in black dialect

(1) He took five book.
(2) The other teacher, they'll yell at you.

b. The plurals of irregular nouns are frequently formed with the regular "-s" suffix.

(1) one foot/two foots
(2) one deer/two deers

c. Black dialect may add the "-s" suffix to the irregular plural of standard English words to form "double plurals"

(1) mens, womens, teeths, mices, peoples

2. The possessive construction in black English

a. In forming the possessive with common nouns, no marker is used if the word for the possessor precedes the word for the thing possessed

(1) The boy hat.
(2) John old lady house.

3. Usages of personal, demonstrative, and relative pronouns

a. Prenominal Apposition is the construction in which

a. a pronoun, usually the nominative form, is used in apposition to the noun subject

(1) My brother, he bigger than you.
(2) That teacher, she yell all the time.

b. In an existential or expletive function, black dialect uses "it"

(1) It's a boy in my room name Robert.
(2) It was one in the hall this morning.

c. The personal pronouns "they" and "you" may be substituted for the possessive pronouns "their" and "your"

(1) They brought it on they own selves.
(2) I like you coat.

d. The pronoun "them" often replaces the demonstrative pronoun "those"; "this" is often reinforced by "here"

(1) I want them books
(2) I want this here book.

e. The pronoun "which" often replaces the standard form "who"

(1) Linda, which is my sister...

C. Negation in Black Dialect

1. The use of Ain't

a. "Ain't" is a common negative form of "is", "are", "am" and auxiliary "have" and "has"

(1) He ain't here.
(2) I ain't goin'.

b. "Ain't" is often used as a past tense signal, having merged with "int" for "didn't"

(1) He ain't start it.
(2) He ain't touch me.

2. Mutiple Negation

a. A negative may be attracted to every indefinite pronoun or adverb so that a single element, instead of being represented by one negative form, is expressed by two or more

(1) He doesn't know nothing.
(2) I ain't never had no trouble wit' none of them.

b. Negation can be expressed with negative adverbs

(1) He doesn't hardly come to see us.

c. If a sentence has an indefinite noun phrase containing a negative marker (nobody, nothing, no dog) before the verb, the negativized form of the verbal auxiliary (can't, wasn't, didn't) may appear at the beginning of the sentence

(1) Can't nobody do it.
(2) Wasn't nothing wrong.

D. Sentence Patterns

1. The formation of questions

a. Direct questions may not be expressed in inverted form, and may omit "do" or "does"

(1) He fixes that?
(2) How it taste?

b. The inverted form of the question is used for indirect questions, but without the forms "if" or "whether"

(1) I want to know where did he go?
(2) I want to know did he go somewhere?

II. Phonological Characteristics of Black English

A. Consonants and Consonant Clusters

1. The final member of consonant clusters

a. A single consonant for a word-final cluster occurs

only when both members of a cluster are either voiced or voiceless*

(1) Voiced - (nd) mind; (ld) cold
(2) Voiceless - (st) test; (sp) wasp; (ft) left; (pt) adept; (ct) act

b. When one of the members of the cluster is voiced and one is silent, the reduction does not occur

(1) (mp) jump - m is voiced; p voiceless
(2) (nt) count - n is voiced; t voiceless
(3) (lt) belt - l is voiced; t voiceless

c. As a result of the consonant cluster rule, certain pairs of words in black dialect have the same pronunciation

(1) bill/build
(2) coal/cold
(3) west/Wes

2. Pluralization in relation to the consonant reduction rule

a. Words ending in "- s" plus "-p", "-t" or "-k" add the "-es" plural, forming the plural as if the word ended in "-s" rather than "-sk, "-st", or "-sp"

(1) desk/desses
(2) ghost/ghoses
(3) wasp/wasses

3. The "-ed" suffix as a past tense; past participle and derived adjective marker

*Consonant Sounds

Voiced	b	d	g	j	v	w	z	th (this)
Voiceless	p	t	k c	ch	f	wh	s	th (things)
Voiced	-	l	m	n	ng	r	y	zh (azure)
Voiceless	h	-	-	-	-	-	-	sh

a. When the addition of the "-ed" suffix results in either a voiced or voiceless cluster, the cluster may be reduced

(1) Past tense marker - Yesterday he mov' away. (vd)
(2) Participle - The boy was mess' up. (st)
(3) Adjective - He had a scratch' arm. (st)

B. The "th" Sounds

1. The sounds for "th" in black dialect are dependent on where "th" occurs in a word and/or what sounds occur next to it

a. Word Initial - at the beginning of a word, the "th" is pronounced in one of three ways

(1) Voiced interdental fricative - the "th" is pronounced as a "d"

(a) the/de; they/dey; that/dat

(2) Voiceless interdental fricative - the "th" is sometimes pronounced as "t"

(a) thought/tought; think/tink; thin/tin

(3) "th" followed by "r" - such words may be pronounced with an "f"

(a) three/free; throat/froat

b. Within a word three main pronunciations are possible for "th"

(1) for the Voiceless sound, it's pronounced as "f"

(a) nothing/nuf'n; author/ahfuh; ether/eefuh

(2) for the Voiced sound, "th" is pronounced as "v"

(a) brother/bruvah; rather/ravah; bathing/bavin'

(3) for "th" followed by a nasal sound, it's pronounced "t"

(a) arithmetic/'ritmetic; nothing/nut'n; monthly/montly

c. Word Final - three main pronunciations are apparent for "th" when it comes at the end of a word

(1) The predominant sound for final "th" is "f"

(a) Ruth/Ruf; tooth/toof; south/souf

(2) When the preceding sound is the nasal sound "n", a "t" sound may occur

(a) tenth/tent'; month/mont'

(3) The stop "t" or "d" may also be used with the preposition "with"

(a) wit, wid

C. Controlled Vowels

1. The pronunciation rule for "r" and "l" in black dialect depends on whether they appear a) after a vowel; b) between the vowels; or c) after initial consonants

a. After a Vowel (post-vocalic) - only a "phonetic vestige" of "r" or "l" is pronounced, unless it precedes a consonant in which case no phonetic vestige is evident at all

(1) sister/sistuh; steal/steauh; nickel/nickuh; bear/beauh
(2) help/hep

b. Between Vowels - "r" or "l" may be absent when followed by another word beginning with a vowel, and also between two vowels within a word

(1) fouh apples
(2) Carol/Ca'ol; story/sto'y; marry/ma'y

c. After Initial Consonants - "r" may be absent when the following vowel is either "o" or "u" or in unstressed syllables

(1) throw/th'ow; through/th'ough
(2) protect/p'otect; professor/p'ofessuh

D. Nazalization

1. There are several aspects of the nasals "-m", "n", and "ng", some characteristic to all nonstandard dialects, others unique to Black English

   a. The use of "-in" for the suffix "-ing" (e.g., singin', buyin', swimin')

   b. At the end of a syllable, the final nasal consonant is sometimes not pronounced, rather a nasalization of the preceding vowel occurs, causing such words as "rum", "run", and "rung" to sound alike

   c. Before a nasal consonant, "i" and "e" do not contrast, making such words as pin and pen, and tin and ten sound identical

E. Rules Concerning Final "b", "d" and "g"

1. Devoicing

   a. At the end of a syllable, the voiced stops "b", "d" and "g" are often pronounced as the corresponding voiceless stops "p", "t", and "k"

      NOTE: The above rule does not mean that such words as "pig/pick", "bud/butt" and "cab/cap" are pronounced alike. They are distinguished by the length of the vowel. The vowel is lengthened before sounds such as "d" in "bud", even though the "d" is actually pronounced "t".

   b. "Devoicing" can take place in an unstressed syllable (e.g. "salat" for "salad", "hundret" for "hundred") as well as a stressed syllable ("mut" for "mud", "goot" for "good", loat for "load"

2. Deletion of "d"

   a. Some black dialect speakers may have the complete absence of the stop "d", more frequently, however, when "d" is followed by a consonant than a vowel; its absence is most common before "s" or "z"

      (1) goo' man; ba' soldier
      (2) kiz for kids; boahz for boards

SPANISH DIALECT

Target Audience: When words are to be used in Spanish, they should reflect the idiom of Puerto Rican and Mexican-American children for viewing in New York and the Southwest, or any other area heavily populated by estos latinos. Stories that depict the culture of the target latin population - Dominicano, Mexicano, Puerto Riqueno, Columbiano, Cubano, predominant in New York and U. S. - should be included in the series.

Teaching Techniques: Spanish is very regularly phonetic; therefore, it is very easy to teach reading through a phonetic approach. Simple songs and games are very effective for teaching Spanish, even for non-Spanish speaking children, especially if there is action. The use of the minimal pairs with visuals wherever possible is very helpful. For example:

chair	share
chip	ship
chew	shoe
chin	shin
boat	vote
bolt	volt
base	vase
watch	wash
watch watches	washes
ditch	dish
yellow	jello

Words with long e sound and words with short i sound, (e.g., sheet - sister) should not be presented together.

Writer's Notebook - Non-Standard Dialect

Translation Problems: She and her, he and him, and they and them are very difficult concepts for Spanish speakers since the same word for these pronouns is used in Spanish. For example:

she her	ella
he him	el
they them	ellos
we us	nogotros

Literal translations are also a problem with Spanish speaking children.

He wants water. -

Quiere aqua.
Quiere aqua? (Intonation)

Eng. - This is a red house.
Children say - This is a house red.
Span. - Esta es una casa roja.

Some Spanish words have no translation into English: pinato, charro, marriachi, taco, tamales, etc.

Consonants: Omission of final consonants often occurs in non-standard speech. However, final consonants are more often produced when the next word begins with a vowel.

J sounds like y in Spanish, so that for Spanish-American children yellow/Jello will be a confusable pair. Also, v and b sound like b at the beginning of words and like v between vowels.

Z sounds like s; w does not appear at all. Devoicing of final consonants is characteristic of Spanish-American dialect speech. Thus 'raise' becomes 'race,' 'add' becomes 'at,' 'leave' becomes 'leaf.' Initial t becomes d. 'Ten' becomes 'den.' 'S' preceding consonants (c,l,m,n,p,q) is pronounced -es by Spanish speakers (estop, eski). A consultant has suggested that words that begin and end with the same consonant (pop, dud, mom) are useful in overcoming this problem. -b and -v are interchangeable to Spanish speakers, while -h is silent.

Short Vowels: For Spanish speakers, short i is confusable with long e (ship/sheep), short a and short o are confusable (hat/hot), and short u is pronounced like the oo sound in pool. Short e is confusable with the a sound in mat, and the a sound in mate. Boat is confusable with bought. Short e seldom occurs before nasals. The real problem is that short i is raised in the mouth to sound like a, so that think sounds like thank.

Consonant Digraphs: These sounds do not exist in Spanish language: sh, th, wh, w, ph (this is not hard, because it has a corresponding sound in Spanish, f.) y sounds like English j, and z sounds like an s. . Sh is confusable with ch, and th is frequently s, so that thin becomes sin. Most Spanish speakers pronounce the th like a d in English. For example: father - fadder; mother - modder; that - dat; they - dey.

Writer's Notebook - Non-Standard Dialect

Although -sh is not a sound in Spanish, the kind of mistakes Spanish-speaking children make are sheckers for checkers, rather than chip for ship. Thus, ch is the sound that needs emphasis.

Vowel Diphthongs: the -ee sound at the end of the diphthong is most often lacking before -l. This causes confusions like oil/all.

Morphemes: Most of the morphemes in the goals list were singled out because they are either absent or realized in a different way in some non-standard speech. The point in including them is to help speakers of non-standard dialects to interpret standard English print. Therefore it is more important for our purposes that these morphemes be presented as signals for certain meanings, purposes that these morphemes be presented as signals for certain meanings, and that they be recognized as such, than that they elicit appropriate sounds in oral reading. For example, it is desirable to include time signals like 'today', 'now,' 'last year,' in sentences illustrating tense markers, so that the association between the morpheme (e.g. -ed) and the time it signals (e.g. past) is clear.

-ed is generally not added to the verb to mark past tense by Black English or Spanish speakers.

-s (plural) is sometimes absent, but it is often pronounced if the next word begins with a vowel sound, or where there is no numeral in the sentence to serve as a plural marker.

Writer's Notebook - Non-Standard Dialect

-s (third person singular) is generally not employed in Black English, and is also a problem for Spanish speakers.

-'s is usually omitted (Mr. Brown hat is the common form).

-s (plural) can come out as d.

Contractions are particularly troublesome; they make sounds which are hard for dialect speakers to hear anyway even harder. Contractions are very seldom used by Black and Puerto Rican speakers anyway, so they ought to be avoided for the most part.

APPENDIX I

Frequency and Learnability Data

For English Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondences

NOTE: According to our educational advisors, we should consider both frequency and learnability factors in deciding which letter/sound correspondences to emphasize. The following chart is comprised of (1) data compiled by Edward Fry based on many frequency counts, (both individual groups and item within each group are arranged in order of frequency) and (2) data compiled by E. B. Coleman based on the task of matching letter to sound (arranged in ascending difficulty.) This learnability list, however, does not include all English phonemes.

	Frequency List	Learnability List
Consonants	t l n c r p m s d f s	s g z n m w k d f h v t p y b j r l
Short Vowels	i - pin e - pet a - cat o - hot u - cut	o - sot u - sup a - sat e - set i - sit
Consonants	v j g z h y w x k q	No data available

	Frequency List	Learnability List
Digraphs	ch - chair th - thing sh - she th - they	sh - shut th - the ch - chin
Second Sounds	c - city g - gin	
Vowel Pairs	ea - eat ee - beet ai - aid ow - own ay - day oa - oak	oo - boot ee - see
Diphthongs	ou - out ow - owl oi - oil oy - boy	ow - how oy - boy
Consonant Blends	st pr tr gr br pl sp cr cl dr bl sk nt ct	

APPENDIX II

Consonant Elements

Continuants

Voiced: v, z, j, (soft) g (gem), th (that
Voiceless: f, h, s, th (thin), sh, ch

Stopped Consonants

Voiced: b, d, (hard) g (go)
Voiceless: p, t, k

Glides

Voiced: l, r, y, w

Nasal Consonants

Voiced: m, n

APPENDIX III

Per Cent of Utility for

Vowel Combinations

NOTE: Although we generally will be teaching only one sound for each vowel pair, it may be important to remember that there are some common exceptions to the rule. The following chart indicates the Per Cent of Utility for each vowel pair listed in the curriculum, as based on four different studies. For example, "ea" as in neat is said to have a per cent of utility (depending on the particular study) of 66, 55, 62, 51, or an average of 58%. This means that on an average, every time an "ea" combination is encountered in a standard English passage, it will be pronounced with the long "e" sound. Some common exceptions, however, are also listed.

The four studies were each based on different word lists. Those studies and what comprised their word lists are as follows:

(1) "The Utility of Phonic Generalizations in the Primary Grades" by Theodore Clymer: Word list based on the words found in four different basal reading series and the Gates Reading Vocabulary.

(2) "The Utility of Phonic Generalizations in Grades One Through Six", by Mildred Hart Bailey:- Word list based on words representative of reading series 1-6 in eight different basal reading series.

(3) "The Usefulness of Phonic Generalizations Above the Primary Grades" by Robert Emans: Word list based on 10% of the words (1,944) beyond the primary level (grade four) in The Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words, By Thorndike and Lorge.

(4) "Vowel Pairs" by Lou E. Burmeister: Word list based on 15,284 words selected from Part I, Thorndike Lorge Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words plus 2,026 selected from Merian Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary.

VOWEL PAIR STUDIES

Vowel Combination	% of Utility	Average	Exceptions
ea as in neat	66 (1)	58%	ocean, head, bread
	55 (2)		deaf, break, measure
	62 (3)		ready, treasure,
	51 (4)		weapon
ee as in seen	98		been, deer
	87	93%	cheer, engineer
	100		
	86		
ay as in day	78		always, prayer
	88	90%	says
	100		
	97		
ai as in bait	64		said, mountain,
	72	73%	plaid, villain
	83		again, aisle
	75		chair
ow as in know	59		down, scowl
	50	52%	trowel, know-
	50		ledge
	50		
oa as in boat	97	92%	cupboard,
	95		broad, oasis
	86		
	94		
oo as in food	58		floor, blood
oo as in good	36		
ie as in field	17		friend, brier
	31	27%	impatience
	23		
	35		
ie as in die	16.7 (4)		

Writer's Notebook - Curriculum Outline

Vowel Combination	% of Utility	Average	Exceptions
oy as in boy	98 (4)		coyote
oi as in boil	98 (4)		porpoise
ou as in found	35 (4)		rigorous, soup four, touch, your